



**Metacombet – King Philip**



**This is a biographical/historical work  
based on the 1904 public domain book  
“The Story Of King Philip”  
by Edson L. Whitney  
with edits, notes and additional images**

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## A GRAND SACHEM

Metacomet, later known as Philip, ruler of the Wampanoags, was the only Indian in our country to whom the English colonists gave the title of king.

*(Note) Metacomet was a Wampanoag whose tribe sought to live in harmony with the colonists at first. He became sachem (chief) in 1662, after the deaths of his father and older brother. As a leader he took the lead in his tribe's trade with the colonists. In time, he took the name King Philip to honor the relations between the colonists and his father and even purchased European style apparel in Boston.*

The Wampanoags were a tribe of Indians whose homes were in what is now southeastern Massachusetts and in Rhode Island east of Narragansett Bay. A few of them, also, lived on the large islands farther south, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard.



Three centuries ago Massasoit, Philip's father, was the grand sachem, or ruler, of the Wampanoags. His people did not form one united tribe. They had no states, cities, and villages, with governors, mayors, and aldermen. They lived in very small villages. A few families pitched their wigwams together and lived in much the same way as people do now when they camp out in the summer.

Generally, among the Wampanoags, only one family lived in a wigwam. The fathers, or heads of the families in the different wigwams, came together occasionally and consulted about such matters as seemed important to them.

Every one present at the meeting had a right to express his opinion on the question under consideration, and as often as he wished. All spoke calmly, without eloquence, and without set speeches. They talked upon any subject they pleased, as long as they pleased, and when they pleased.

The most prominent person in a village was called the sagamore. His advice and opinion were generally followed, and he governed the people in a very slight manner. The Indians of several villages were sometimes united together in a petty tribe and were ruled by a sachem, or chief. The chief did not rule over a very large tract of country. Generally none of his subjects lived more than eight or ten miles away from him.



He ruled as he pleased, and was not subject to any constitution or court of any kind. In fact, he was a leader rather than a ruler. Nevertheless, a wise chief never did anything of great importance without first consulting the different sagamores of his tribe.

The chief held a little higher position in the tribe than the sagamore did in his village.

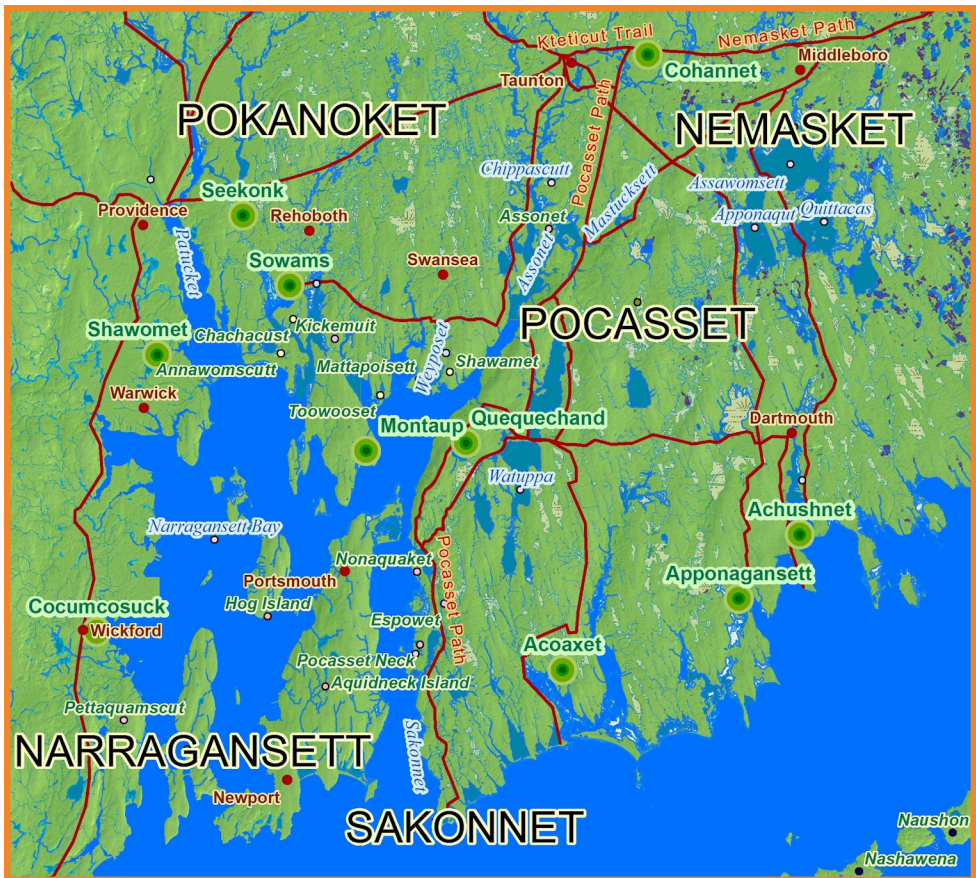
He settled disputes. He held a very rude form of court, where justice was given in each case according to its merits. He sent and received messengers to and from other tribes.



As several villages were united in a single petty tribe, so also several petty tribes were loosely joined together and ruled over by a grand sachem.

The different Wampanoag tribes which owed allegiance to Philip and his father, Massasoit, were five in number besides the small bands on the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. The village where the grand sachem lived was called by them Pokanoket.

**(Note)** The Pokanoket (also spelled Pakanokick) was the village governed by Massasoit (Wampanoag, c. 1581–1661). The term broadened to refer to all peoples and lands governed by Massasoit and his successors, which were part of the Wampanoag people in what is now Rhode Island and Massachusetts.





### **Metacomet's Childhood Home**

Massasoit had several children. The eldest son was named Wamsutta, and the second Metacomet, who took the name Philip. We do not know the exact date of Philip's birth, for the Indians kept no account of time as we do, nor did they trouble to ask any one his age. It is probable, however, that Philip was born before 1620, the year in which the Pilgrims settled near the Wampanoags.

Philip spent his boyhood days playing with his brothers and sisters, and with the neighbors' children; for although he was the son of a grand sachem, he had no special privileges above those of the other children around him. He lived in no better way than did the other members of his tribe. His home was neither better nor worse than theirs. His food was of the same quality. His daily life was the same. He wore no uniform. He never heard of medals or badges. He had no servants. His father differed from the other Indians only in being their leader in time of war and in being looked up to whenever the chiefs of the tribe held a meeting, or council.

Philip's home was not such as American boys and girls are brought up in. There were no toys, no baby carriages, no candy. There were no romps with the parents, for the Indians were a quiet, sober people, and rarely showed any affection for their children.

Philip's father never played any games with him. In fact, in his younger days the boy never received very much attention from his father. He was taken care of by his mother. He was never rocked in a cradle, but was strapped in a kind of bag called a papoose, made of broad pieces of bark and covered with soft fur. Sometimes he was carried in this on his mother's back, as she went about her work. Sometimes he was hung up on the branch of a tree.



The little house in which he lived was called a wigwam. It was circular, or oval, in shape, and made of barks or mats laid over a framework of small poles. These poles were fixed at one end in the ground, and were fastened together at the top, forming a framework shaped somewhat like a tent.

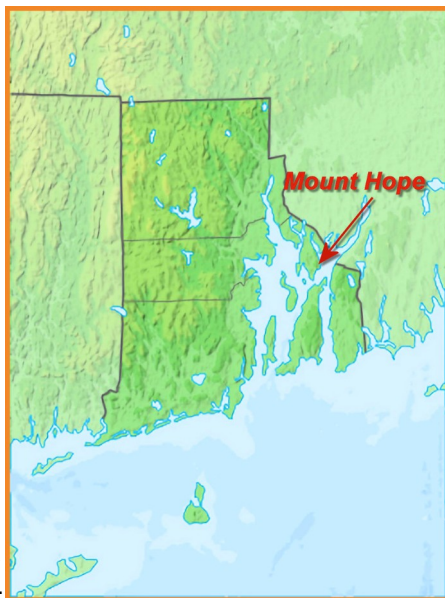
Two low openings on opposite sides of the wigwam served as doors. These were closed with mats when necessary, thus making the place tight and warm. The wigwam had but one room. In the middle of it were a few stones which served as a fireplace. There was no chimney, but the smoke passed out through an opening at the top of the wigwam.

On one side of the fireplace was a large couch made of rough boards raised perhaps a foot above the ground and covered with mats or skins. The couch was very wide, so that Philip and the rest of the children could lie on it side by side at night.

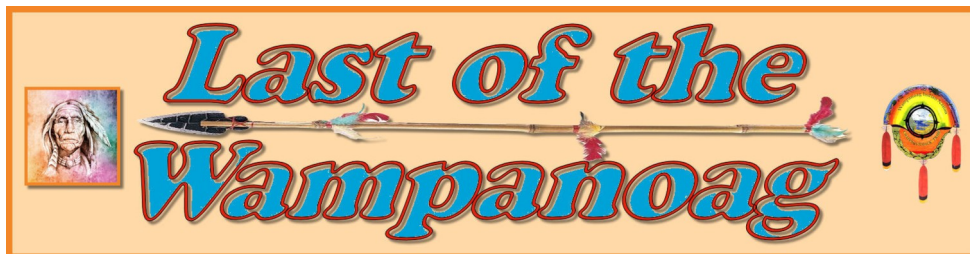
There was no other furniture in the room. A few baskets were hung on the walls ready for use. A few mats were placed here and there as ornaments. The dishes that held Philip's food were rude vessels made of baked clay, of pieces of bark, of bits of hollowed stone, or of wood.

There was very little desire to keep the wigwam neat and tidy. It was used for only a few months, and then given up for a new one that was built near by. In the summer it was customary to pitch the wigwam in an open place. In the winter it was pitched in the thick woods for protection from the winds and storms.

Such was the home in which Philip was brought up. It differed but little from those of his playmates, for there was no aristocracy among the Indians. The place where Massasoit and his family generally lived was near the present site of Bristol, on a narrow neck of land projecting into Narragansett Bay. It is now called Mount Hope, and is twelve or fifteen miles southeast of Providence, Rhode Island.



# *Last of the Wampanoag*



## **MASSASOIT AND HIS TWO SONS**

In the early evening, during his boyhood days, Philip delighted to sit near the camp fire where the members of his tribe were wont to gather. There he eagerly listened to the stories of adventure told by his elders, and wished that he was old enough to enter into the sports that they so interestingly described.

Although children were not expected to talk in the presence of their elders, Philip frequently showed his interest in their stories by asking many questions in regard to the places visited by the older Indians.

In those days news traveled slowly from one little village to another, for there were neither telegraphs nor telephones; no, not even railroads. In fact, there were no roads, and even the paths through the woods were so little used that it was difficult to find one's way from one place to another. The Indians kept no animals of any kind, and always traveled from place to place on foot.



One pleasant evening in June, in the year 1620, young Philip noticed that there was less general story-telling than usual, and that the Indians seemed greatly interested in a long story which one of their number was telling. He could not understand the story, but he frequently caught the words, "Squanto" and "English." These were new words to him.

The next evening, as Philip and his brother were sitting by the fire, they asked their father what had caused the Indians to be so serious in their talk, and what the long story was about.

"Squanto has come home," his father replied.

"And who is Squanto?" asked Philip.

Then his father told him a story, which was too long to be repeated here. But in brief it was as follows:

Several years before—long, in fact, before Philip was born—a ship had come from across the sea. It was larger than any other vessel the Indians had ever seen.

The only boats that Philip knew anything about were quite small, and were called canoes. They were made either of birch bark fastened over a light wooden frame, or of logs that had been hollowed by burning and charring.

But the boat from across the sea was many times larger than any of theirs—so Massasoit explained to the boys—and had accommodations for a great many men. Instead of being pushed along by paddles, it was driven by the wind by means of large pieces of cloth stretched across long, strong sticks of wood.

The Indians did not go down to the shore, but watched this boat from the highlands some distance inland. Finally the vessel stopped and some of the men came ashore. The Indians looked at the strangers in astonishment. Their skin was of a pale, whitish color, very different from that of the Indians, which was of a copper or reddish clay color.

The white men, or the pale-faced men, as Massasoit called them, made signs of friendship to the Indians, and after a few minutes persuaded them to go down to the shore. There the two peoples traded with each other. The Indians gave furs and skins, and received in return beads and trinkets of various kinds.

When the vessel sailed away it carried off five Indians who had been lured on board and had not been allowed to return to shore. These Indians had not been heard from since, and that was fifteen years before.

Young Philip's eyes increased in size, and instinctively he clenched his fists at the thought of the wrong that had been done his people by the palefaces.

His father went on with the story, and told him how the Indians then vowed vengeance on the white man; for it was a custom of the Indians to punish any person who committed a wrong act towards one of their number.

From time to time, other vessels visited their shores, but no Indian could ever be induced to go on board any of them.

Nine years later, another outrage was committed. The palefaces while trading with the Indians suddenly seized upon twenty-seven of the latter, took them to their vessel, and sailed away with them before they could be rescued. Is it any wonder that Philip felt that the whites were his natural enemies?




After that time, Massasoit said, the Indians had refused to have any dealings with the whites. Whenever a white man's vessel came in sight, the Indians prepared to shoot any one that came ashore. And now another white man's vessel had arrived on the coast, and several of its crew had landed in spite of all that could be done to prevent them.

To the great surprise of Massasoit's men, there was an Indian with these palefaces. And that Indian proved to be Squanto, one of the five who had been taken away fifteen years before.

This is but a bare outline of what Massasoit told his sons. It seemed to the lads like a fairy tale, and for days they talked of nothing but this strange story.

*(Note) Squanto was born into the Pawtuxet people who occupied lands in present-day Massachusetts and Rhode Island. He was abducted to Málaga, Spain, to be sold into slavery. Squanto somehow escaped to England and joined the Newfoundland Company. He returned home in 1619 only to find that his people had been wiped out by disease.*

# *Last of the Wampanoag*



## **Metacomet Hears Of the English**

During the following summer young Philip heard many an interesting story about the English. Squanto himself came to see Massasoit several times, and from him Philip heard the story of his adventures across the sea.

Late in the fall, long before Philip had lost his interest in the stories of Squanto, another English vessel arrived on the coast of the Indian country.

On the eleventh day of November, 1620, the vessel anchored near Cape Cod. Sixteen palefaces came ashore. They did not act like the others who had preceded them. They made no effort to become acquainted with the Indians, but spent their time in looking around and in examining the country.

They found four or five bushels of corn, which had been stored for the winter by an Indian, and carried it away to their vessel.

This angered the Indians, and we can well imagine the thoughts that passed through the mind of the boy Philip when he heard that the English had stolen the corn that belonged to a poor Indian, one of his father's friends.





The Indians talked the matter over by their camp fire, and Philip listened to the story as eagerly as he had listened to the story of Squanto six months before.

A week or so later, more news came to Mount Hope. The palefaces had visited the shore a second time, and on this occasion had stolen a bag of beans and some more corn.

How Philip's anger increased as he heard his father talk the matter over with the other Indians!

A few days afterwards Philip heard still other news of the English. They had come ashore a third time. The Indians had watched them from a distance. Finally, when a good opportunity offered itself, thirty or forty Indians quietly surrounded the palefaces, and at a given signal every one of them yelled at the top of his voice and began to shoot arrows at the hated visitors.

For a time it looked as if the palefaces would be driven into the water. But soon they fired their guns, and the Indians ran away frightened at the noise.

Philip was greatly interested in the description that was given of a gun. He had never so much as heard of one before, and he thought it very strange that any one should be afraid of little pieces of lead. He could not see why it was not as easy to dodge bullets as it was to dodge arrows.

A week or two later still further news was brought to Massasoit's village. The palefaces had left Cape Cod and had sailed across the bay to Patuxet (to which the English gave the name of Plymouth). There they had gone ashore and had built some log cabins, evidently with the intention of staying for some time.

This was something that the Indians could not understand. Every day some of them went to the top of the hill which overlooked the little settlement to see what the English were doing. Then they returned to Mount Hope with something new to tell about the palefaces, and Philip eagerly listened to every story that was related.

Several meetings of the Indians were held during the winter, at which Philip was always present, and finally one of their number, whose name was Samoset, was sent to Plymouth to ask the English why they had settled in this land which belonged, of right, to the red men.

Samoset returned a few days later. He told his story to the Indians around the camp fire, Philip, as usual, paying great attention to what was said.

Samoset said that the palefaces had been very kind to him, and had told him that they had come to this country to settle, that they wanted to live on the most friendly terms with the red men, and that they desired to pay not only for the corn and beans which they had taken, but also for the land on which they had built their village.

At the close of his story the Indians expressed themselves as satisfied with the palefaces, and Philip felt that perhaps the English were not so bad as he had thought them to be.

Samoset was then sent to the settlers to tell them that Massasoit and some of his friends would like to meet them for a friendly talk about many things that might otherwise become a cause of disagreement between them. He brought back word that the English eagerly welcomed the opportunity to meet the Indians, and had offered to see them on the following day.

*(Note) Samoset was an Abenaki sagamore and the first Native American to make contact with the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony. He startled the colonists on March 16, 1621, by walking into Plymouth Colony and greeting them in English, saying "Welcome, Englishmen." An English fishing camp had been established in the Gulf of Maine. Samoset learned some English from fishermen who came to fish off Monhegan Island and he knew most ship captains by name.*



# *Last of the* *Wampanoag*

## Metacomet Meets The English

The next day Massasoit and sixty of his warriors visited the English. They did not go into the English village, but stopped on the top of the hill near by.

Philip was not with them, for at this time he was too young to go so far away from home. We can imagine his feelings, however, when he saw his father and the warriors start out on their journey.

They were dressed in costumes that would look very strange if seen on our streets to-day. Their clothing was made of the raw skin of wild animals. Their feet were protected by moccasins made of thin deerskin. Each one was tall, erect, and active, with long, coarse, black hair falling down his back.



None of them had any physical deformities, for it was the custom of the tribe to kill any child that was born deaf, dumb, blind, or lame.

Each one was decked with his personal ornaments. These did not consist of gold, silver, diamonds, or any other precious stones so familiar to us. The Indians knew nothing about these. Their ornaments consisted of ear-rings, nose-rings, bracelets, and necklaces made out of shells or fish-bones or shining stones, which were very common in that neighborhood.

Their faces were smeared with heavy daubs of paint. Each one had a cloak thrown over his shoulders, and he also wore a head-dress made of feathers or quills. To Philip it seemed as if he had never seen anything so imposing.

We can imagine how eagerly Philip listened to the story that his father told when he came back home: how the settlers came out to meet him on the hill, and made him a present of three knives, a copper chain, and an ear-ring, besides several good things to eat, very different from anything he had ever tasted before.

Then Massasoit described the treaty that he had made with the palefaces in which the settlers and the Wampanoags had agreed to remain friends and to help each other in every way they could. To make the treaty as strong as possible, the palefaces had written it down on paper and had signed their names to it. The Indians did not know how to read or write. That was something that they had never heard of before. But they drew rude pictures at the end of the writing and called these pictures their names.

Philip never tired listening to the stories about the palefaces. He was still too young to be taken to their settlement, but he longed for a chance to see them.

Suddenly, one day in the middle of the summer of 1621, about four months after the Indians had made their treaty with the whites, six warriors came into the little Indian village at Mount Hope with two men, who Philip saw were palefaces. They were not so tall as the Indians. They were thicker set, and their faces were covered with beards.

Massasoit recognized them immediately, for they were some of the party that he had met at Plymouth. They had come on a friendly visit to him, and had brought him a red cotton coat and a copper chain. Philip was greatly pleased to see the palefaces, of whom he had heard so much. He listened to their stories, answered their inquiries in regard to Indian life, and learned what he could about their homes and customs.

After this, the settlers called on the Indians many times, and Philip soon became very well acquainted with them.

During the next few months several white men came from England and settled at Weymouth, a few miles north of Plymouth. These new settlers were not so honest as those that had settled at Plymouth. They stole from the Indians and otherwise injured them, and caused them to

plot against all the whites in the country. But before their plans were carried out Massasoit was taken sick. The medicine man was called in.

The medicine man was the physician. He had learned the medicinal virtues of a few simple herbs. He knew how to bind up wounds in bark with certain preparations of leaves, and he could also cure a few fevers. He went through many magical ceremonies with howls, roars, and antics of various kinds. If the sick man became well, the medicine man took all the credit; if the patient died, then the medicine man said that the bad spirit had too strong a hold on him.

But the medicine man did not help Massasoit. Philip watched by his father's side and saw him grow worse day by day. He remembered how, only a few years before, the smallpox had carried away large numbers of the Indians, and now he began to think that the days of his father, too, were numbered.

But one day a paleface, one of the leaders of the colony at Plymouth, came into the Indian village. He sent the medicine man away and tenderly nursed Massasoit himself. He gave him medicine, nourished him with several little delicacies, and brought him slowly back to health.

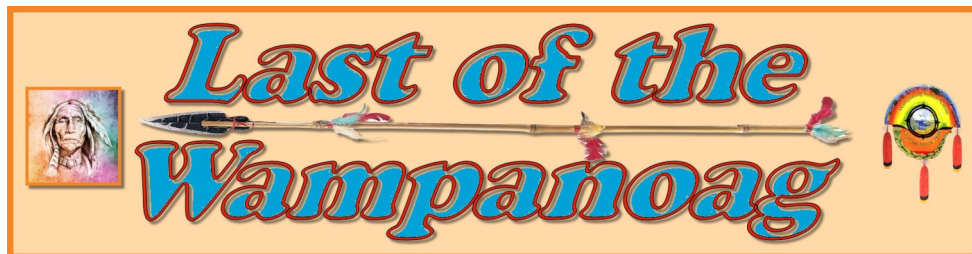
Massasoit was so grateful for the kindness shown him that he told the palefaces of the Indian plot against them.

The whites at Weymouth were driven away and the palefaces at Plymouth continued to live on most excellent terms of friendship with the Wampanoags.

In the years that followed, Philip became better acquainted with the whites, and while he never loved them, he had great respect for their wisdom.

*(Note) Some tension continued between Massasoit and the colonists when they refused to give up Squanto, whom Massasoit believed to have betrayed him. This was resolved in March 1623 when Massasoit was gravely ill and Edward Winslow nursed him back to health. After his recovery, Winslow reports that Massasoit said, "the English are my friends and love me... whilst I live I will never forget this kindness they have showed me." In return for their kindness, Massasoit warned them of a plot against them. He had learned that a group of influential Massachusetts warriors intended to destroy both the Wessagusset and Plymouth colonies, and he warned the Pilgrims in time.*





### **Metacomet's Education**

During the next twenty years many more white men came and settled on or near the lands of the Wampanoags.

In the mean time, Philip grew to manhood and received the same education that was given to the other young men of his tribe. It was very different from the education received by us to-day. The Indians had no schools. Philip did not learn his A B C's or the multiplication table. He never learned how to read or write. He knew nothing about science, and could not even count, or keep track of time.

His education was of a different character, and was intended to make him brave, daring, hardy, and able to bear pain; for these things were thought by the Indians to be of the greatest importance.

He was taught to undergo the most horrible tortures without a word of complaint or a sign of anguish. He would beat his shins and legs with sticks, and run prickly briars and brambles into them in order to become used to pain. He would run eighty to one hundred miles in one day and back in the next two.

When he neared manhood he was blindfolded and taken into the woods far from home to a place where he had never been before.

There he was left with nothing but a hatchet, a knife, and a bow and arrows. The winter was before him, and he was expected to support himself through it. If he was unable to do so, it was better for him to die then.

Philip passed the lonely winter far away from home. Many times did he wish that he was back in his father's wigwam where he could talk with his parents and his brothers and his friends, and know what the pale-faces were doing.

But he knew that if he should return to his little village before the winter was over he would be branded as a coward, and never be considered worthy to succeed his father as sachem.



What, he, Philip, a prince, afraid? No, no, no! Of course he was not afraid. What was there to be afraid of? Had he not always lived in the woods? Still, he was a little lonely, and once in a while he wanted some one to talk with.

So Philip went to work with a will. With his hatchet he cut down some small trees, made them into poles, and placed one end of them in the ground. With his knife he cut some bark from the trees and laid it over the poles so that he had a fairly comfortable shelter from the storms and winds which he knew would soon surely come. Then he spent several days in hunting birds and wild game in the forest. With his bow and arrows he shot enough to support himself through the winter.

Many an adventure did he have. Many a time did he lie down at night without having tasted food during the whole livelong day. Many a savage beast did he see, and on several occasions he climbed trees, or crawled into caves, or ran as fast as he could, to get out of their way.

But he had a strong will. He knew that the son of the grand sachem of the Wampanoags could do anything that any other Indian had done. And so he passed the long, cold winter, bravely and without complaining.

In the spring, when his father and friends came after him, they found him well and strong. His winter's work had made him healthy and rugged. He was taken home, and a feast was prepared in honor of Massasoit's son who had returned to his home stronger than when he had gone away the fall before.

During the next two moons—for the Indians counted by moons and not by months as we do—Philip led an idle life. He did no work of any kind. He was taking his vacation after the hard winter life he had led alone in the woods.

But his education was not yet finished. His body had been made strong. It was next necessary to strengthen his constitution against the evil effects of poison. He again went into the forest, and daily found poisonous and bitter herbs and roots. These he bruised and put the juices into water, which he drank.

Then he drank other juices which acted as antidotes and prevented his sickness or death. He did this day after day until his constitution became used to the poisons, and he was able to drink them freely without any harm coming to him.

Then he went home. The people sang and danced and gave him another great feast. He was now considered a man and ready to marry and have a wigwam of his own.

The wedding ceremony was extremely simple. There were no presents, no flowers, no guests, no ceremony, no banquet. Philip simply asked a certain woman to come and live with him. She came and was thereafter his wife, or squaw, as the Indians called her.

We have no record of the date of his marriage, for the Indians kept no such records. We only know that it took place soon after his return from his battle with poisons in the woods.

**(Note)** Metacom married Weetamoo's younger sister Wootonekanuske. It is unclear how many children they had or what happened to them. Wootonekanuske and one of their sons were sold to slavery in the West Indies following the defeat of the Native Americans in what became known as King Philip's War.



### **Metacomet's Daily Life**

We should consider the daily life of Philip very monotonous. It was the same, day by day, year in and year out, with very little change. The little village where he lived contained fewer than one hundred inhabitants. Everybody was thoroughly acquainted with everybody else.

There was no society such as we have to-day. Philip's squaw did not dress herself up in the afternoon, and make calls on the other squaws. If she wished to talk with them she went where they were, whether it was morning, afternoon, or evening.

There were no parties, no receptions, no theaters, no art museums, no libraries, no books, no music, no fireworks, no holidays, no Sabbath. The Indians believed in a good and a bad spirit, but they had no churches or temples or service or worship or priests.

So we cannot think of Philip sitting in the best pew in church, and listening to a grand sermon, preached by the most famous minister in the country. Philip knew nothing of sermons.

He played no games that instructed his mind. He cared for only such games as would strengthen his body, increase his power of endurance, or develop his muscle or his craftiness. With the other Indians he played football, tossed quoits, wrestled, ran, and jumped.

Occasionally he engaged with them in the war dance. This was performed in a very solemn manner. It represented a war campaign, or a sham battle, as we say. First, the Indians came together from different directions. Then they marched forward stealthily and quietly, lay in ambush, awaited the coming of the enemy, suddenly jumped out and rushed upon them, slaughtered them, retreated, and finally went home. The dance ended with the reception at home, and the torturing and killing of the prisoners.

These were his amusements. His occupations were two in number: hunting and fishing.

In the fall of the year, and again in the spring, he spent about three months in hunting. In company with his brother or some close friend, he went in search of a supply of meat for the use of the family, and of skins to sell to the white men or to use for clothing.

After reaching the hunting-grounds, they built a big wigwam where they stayed at night. There also they stored the skins of the animals they had captured.

Many stories might be told of the exciting adventures they had with bears and wolves. The woods of New England contained many moose and other wild animals, and generally Philip returned to his little village with meat enough to last all winter. Frequently he brought home as many as one hundred beaver skins.

But Philip, like others, had bad luck sometimes. Now and then he lost his way in the woods, and on one or two occasions the raft on which he was taking his skins across the river upset and the results of his winter's labor were lost.

He captured his game by shooting or snaring, or by catching it in pit-falls. When the hunting season was over he spent his time in fishing. Generally he caught his fish in nets, although occasionally he used a hook and line.



When not engaged in hunting or fishing, or attending a meeting of Indian princes, he was generally to be found near his wigwam, asleep or watching his squaw at work.



All the work around the wigwam was done by his wife or squaw. According to the Indian view she was his slave. She covered and lined the wigwam, plaited the mats and baskets, planted, tended, and harvested the corn and vegetables, cooked the food, ate the leavings, and slept on the coldest side of the wigwam.

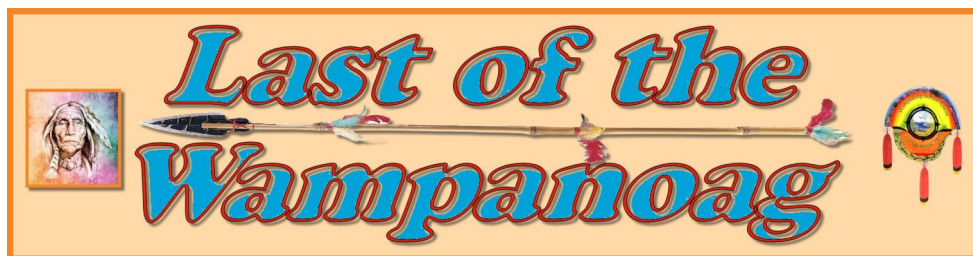
Many Indians did not care very much for their squaws, and made their lives miserable by treating them badly, and showing them no sympathy nor love in any way whatever. But we are told that Philip was better than the other Indians in this respect. He loved his wife and treated her as a companion instead of as a slave.

Philip had no pots and kettles like ours. His wife roasted his meat by placing it on the point of a stake. She broiled it by laying it on hot coals or hot stones. She boiled it in rude vessels made of stone, earth, or wood, and heated the water by throwing hot stones into it.

Philip's only garden tool was a hoe, made of clam shells or of a moose's shoulder-blade fastened to a wooden handle. He also had a rude axe or hatchet made of a piece of stone, sharpened by being scraped on another stone, and tied to a wooden handle. His arrows and spears were tipped with bone or with triangular pieces of flint. These were all home-made, for Philip, like other Indians, was obliged to make his own hatchets and arrows.



Finally, Philip never went to the store to buy things to be used at home, for the Indians kept no stores. His wife raised the corn, squashes, and pumpkins, and he caught his own fish and game. These, with nuts, roots, and berries, gave him all the food he needed.



### **Metacomet's Relations With the English**

Such was the daily life of Philip year after year, with but little change. Occasionally he met the palefaces in the woods or at his father's village. Now and then he went to Plymouth and traded with them. Several of them he considered to be his strong personal friends.

We have already seen how greatly interested he was in his boyhood days at the coming of the white men and how friendly he felt toward them at that time. He, his father, and the other Wampanoags continued to remain on friendly terms with the English, although several other Indian tribes did not.

Between the years 1628 and 1640 many white people settled forty or fifty miles north of Plymouth, in what is now Boston and Salem, and other cities and towns near Massachusetts Bay.

Others settled inland on the Connecticut River, near the present boundary line between Massachusetts and Connecticut, about seventy-five miles west from Mount Hope, the home of Philip. Others settled at Providence, and still others on the island of Rhode Island, fifteen to twenty miles south of Mount Hope.

The settlers on the Connecticut had trouble with the Pequots, a tribe of Indians living to the west of the Wampanoags, and in the war that followed, all the Pequots were killed. The whites also had trouble with the Narragansetts, who lived near Providence, outbreaks occurring every year or two for several years.

During these years Philip and his father did nothing to injure the settlers in any way. They refused to aid the other Indians in their wars with the English, preferring to remain faithful to their early treaty with the whites; and the whites remained on the most friendly terms with them.

Philip knew nothing of the Christian religion. Several attempts were made by the whites to convert the Indians to Christianity. In 1646, John Eliot translated the Bible into the Indian language, taught the Indians the English habits of industry and agriculture, and established near Boston two towns composed entirely of converted Indians.

At the same time, Thomas Mayhew preached to the Wampanoags on Martha's Vineyard, and there converted a great many. By the year 1675, four thousand Indians had been converted to Christianity.

But the missionaries were not successful with Philip and the Wampanoags at Mount Hope. They utterly refused to listen to the preachers. They preferred their former mode of life, and there were several good reasons for this preference, as they thought.

Philip noticed that many white men who called themselves Christians were in the habit of stealing from the red men, and cheating them whenever they could. He could not see that the Christian religion made them more happy, more honest, or better than he was.


Again, he noticed that, as soon as the Indians were converted, they left their former life and companions and joined themselves to the English. This tended to lessen the control of the chiefs over their tribes, and so reduced their power. Thus he saw that a great deal might be lost by changing his religion, or by urging his followers to change theirs.

Nevertheless, Massasoit and his sons remained strong friends to the Plymouth people until 1661, when Massasoit died, being about eighty years of age.



**(Note)** Massasoit was humane and honest, kept his word, and endeavored to imbue his people with a love of peace. He kept the Pilgrims advised of any war-like designs toward them by other tribes. It is unclear when Massasoit died. Some accounts claim that it was as early as 1660; others

contend that he died as late as 1662. He was anywhere from 80 to 90 at the time.



# *Last of the Wampanoag*

## **Metacomet Becomes Grand Sachem**

According to the custom of the Indians, Wamsutta, the eldest son of Massasoit, succeeded his father as grand sachem of the Wampanoags.

Almost his first act was to go to Plymouth, where he made some requests of the settlers. These were granted. Then he asked for an English name, and was given the name of Alexander. He was so much pleased with this name that he asked for an English name for his younger brother, Metacomet. The English gave him the name of Philip, by which name we have been calling him in our account of his life.

A few days later, ten armed men suddenly appeared at the place where Wamsutta and several of his followers were holding a feast, and arrested them all. Wamsutta was taken to Plymouth immediately, and charged with plotting with the Narragansetts against the English.

Being seized by force on their own grounds, and compelled to go to Plymouth to answer charges based on rumor, was a new experience for the Wampanoags. It was very different from the friendly manner in which they had been treated formerly. The English treated Wamsutta very well at Plymouth. They could prove nothing against him, and hence they soon let him go. On his way home he died.

As Wamsutta left no children, he was succeeded by his brother Philip. There was no ceremony of crowning, no procession, no speeches. In fact, there was no crown at all; nor was there any ceremony of any kind. The other Indians merely obeyed Philip just as they had formerly obeyed his father and his brother.

Philip and all the members of the Wampanoag tribe believed that Wamsutta's death was due to poison which had been given him by the whites when he was at Plymouth. According to the belief and custom of the Indians, it was Philip's duty to take vengeance on those who had caused his brother's death.

Still, Philip made no attempt to injure the whites in any way. But the whites became suspicious, probably because they felt that they had done wrong; and very soon they summoned Philip to Plymouth to answer a charge of plotting against them.

Philip acted very honorably in the matter. Instead of hiding in the forest, as he might easily have done, he went to Plymouth. There he had a long talk with the whites. He denied that he had plotted against them. He showed them that it was against his own interests to have any trouble with them, and as proof of his good intentions toward them, he offered to leave his next younger brother with them as a hostage.

He agreed to continue the treaty that his father had made forty years before. He went further, and acknowledged himself to be a faithful subject of the King of England, and promised not to make war on any Indian tribe unless the English first gave their consent.

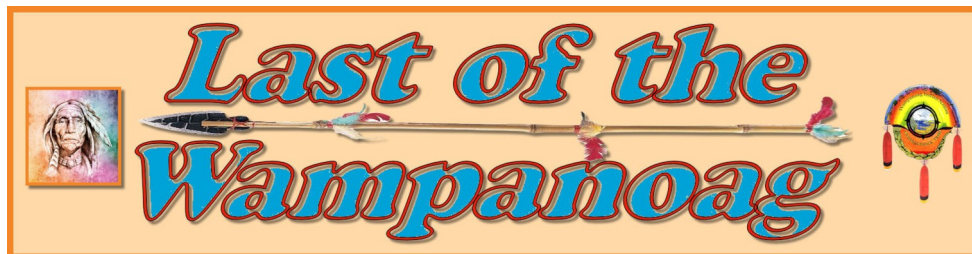
For several years Philip was grand sachem of the Wampanoags and kept this treaty with great faithfulness. During this time his duties were similar to those which his father had had, and his life was uneventful. He was consulted by the other sachems of the tribe, and his advice was generally followed by them.

Like his father, the good Massasoit, he was inclined to be conservative; that is, he did not like to change the established order of things. He was very much liked by the Indians, who felt that he tried to treat them all honestly and fairly.

He went to Plymouth very frequently, to visit the whites and to trade with them. And, likewise, the whites frequently came to Mount Hope to see him.

The relations between the whites and the Indians were such that it was perfectly safe for a white man to go anywhere among the Wampanoags unarmed. This is something that cannot be said of any other Indian tribe in the colonial days. The Indians, acting under orders from King Philip, treated the whites honestly and fairly. In fact, there was a feeling of great friendship between the whites and the Indians.





# *Last of the Wampanoag*

## **Metacomet's Troubles With The Whites**

Ten years passed by peacefully, except for one little trouble, which occurred in 1667, six years after Philip became sachem. An Indian told the people at Plymouth that Philip had said that he wished the Dutch would beat the English in the war which was then being carried on between Holland and England.

*(Note) In the 1670 Secret Treaty of Dover, Charles II of England agreed to support an attack by Louis XIV of France on the Dutch Republic. By doing so, Louis hoped to gain control of the Spanish Netherlands, while Charles sought to restore the damage to his prestige caused by the 1667 Raid on the Medway. Under the treaty, Charles also received secret payments which he hoped would make him financially independent of the English Parliament.*

The Plymouth people were very much surprised at this, and immediately called Philip to account. But he denied ever making any such statement, and offered to surrender all his arms to the English in order to show that he had no hostile designs against them. This satisfied the English. Everything went on quietly until 1671, when troubles between the two races finally began to arise. In that year Philip complained that the English were not living up to their agreement which they had made with him ten years before. At the request of the people of Plymouth, Philip went to Taunton, a village near his hunting-grounds, and talked matters over with them. He was accompanied by a band of warriors armed to the teeth and painted. The meeting was held in the little village church. Philip and his Indians sat on one side of the room and the English on the other. A man from Boston, who was thought to be friendly to both parties, was chosen to preside over the meeting. Then the Indians and the settlers made speeches, one after the other, just as is done in meetings to-day.

Philip admitted that lately he had begun to prepare for war, and also that some of his Indians had not treated the whites justly. But he also showed that the English were arming themselves, and that many of them had cheated the Indians when dealing with them. Philip said that he preferred peace to war, and had only armed his warriors in self-defense. Finally, it was decided to make a new treaty. Here is a copy of the new treaty as it was drawn up. Notice the quaint way of expressing the ideas, and also, that many words are not spelled as we spell them to-day. Notice, too, how one-sided the treaty is, and that it is signed only by Philip and the Indians.

**COPY OF THE TREATY MADE AT TAUNTON, APRIL 10, 1671.**

Whereas my Father, my Brother, and my self have formerly submitted our selves and our people unto the Kings Majesty of England, and this Colony of New-Plymouth, by solemn Covenant under our Hand, but I having of late through my indiscretion, and the naughtiness of my heart, violated and broken this my Covenant with my friends by taking up arms, with evill intent against them, and that groundlessly; I being now deeply sensible of my unfaithfulness and folly, do desire at this time solemnly to renew my Covenant with my ancient Friends and my Father's friends above mentioned; and doe desire this may testifie to the world against me, if ever I shall again fail in my faithfulness towards them (that I have now and at all times found so kind to me) or any other of the English colonyes; and as a reall Pledge of my true Intentions, for the future to be faithful and friendly, I doe freely ingage to resign up unto the Government of New-Plymouth, all my English Armes to be kept by them for their security, so long as they shall see reason. For true performance of the Premises I have hereunto set my hand together with the rest of my council.

In the presence of	The Mark of	Philip, Chief Sachem of Pokanoket
William Davis.	The Mark of	Tavoser.
William Hudson.	— — —	Capt. Wisposke.
Thomas Brattle.	— — —	Woonkaponehunt.
	— — —	Nimrod.




But Philip doubted the sincerity of the English. He hesitated to give up his arms. Then the settlers ordered him to come to Plymouth and explain why.

Instead of obeying, he went to Boston and complained there of the treatment he had received. He said that his father, his brother, and himself had made treaties of friendship with the English which the latter were trying to turn into treaties of subjection. He said he was a subject of the King of England, but not of the colony of Plymouth, and he saw no reason why the people of Plymouth should try to treat him as a subject.

The people of Massachusetts again made peace between Philip and the settlers at Plymouth. But it could not long continue, for each side had now become thoroughly suspicious of the other.

In 1674, an Indian reported to the settlers that Philip was trying to get the sachems of New England to wage war on the whites. A few days later, that Indian's dead body was found in a lake. The English arrested three Indians and tried them for the murder. They were found guilty and were executed, although the evidence against them was of such a character that it would not have been admitted in a court of justice against a white man.



# *Last of the Wampanoag*

## **Metacomet And The Indian Councils**

Philip thought the matter over. He felt that the English had done the Indians great injustice. In the first place, the land had originally belonged to the Indians. It was not of great value to them, for they used it mainly for hunting purposes. So they had very willingly parted with a few acres to the English in return for some trinkets of very little value—such as a jack-knife, or a few glass beads, or little bells, or a blanket.

Then the English had forbidden the Indian to sell his land to any white man. He was allowed to sell only to the colonial government. This was done in order to protect him from white men who wanted to cheat him; but Philip only saw that it prevented his giving away something of little value to himself, and getting something he wanted in return.

Before the English came, the woods were full of game and the streams were full of fish. Now Philip noticed that the game was going from the woods and the fish from the rivers. He felt that the Indians were becoming poorer and the English were getting richer. Only the poorer lands were owned by the Indians now. All the best were in the hands of the white men.

Philip was also tired of the airs of superiority assumed by the whites. They looked upon the Indians as fit only for servants and slaves. He thought that his people were as good as the whites. He felt that the bonds of love and sympathy between the two races had been broken.

In spite of his many complaints and requests, the English had failed to punish unprincipled white men who had done wrong to the Indians.

Finally, those Indians who had been converted to Christianity had left their old tribes and their former modes of life. This had weakened the power of the Indians, and Philip began to think that the English were Christianizing the Indians simply for the purpose of getting control of their lands.

Philip felt that the question was too deep a one for him to solve. He called the sachems of the Wampanoags together, and talked the matter over with them. Several meetings were held, and every member expressed himself on the subject very freely.

The question then arose, what should they do? It very soon became evident that two opposite opinions were held.

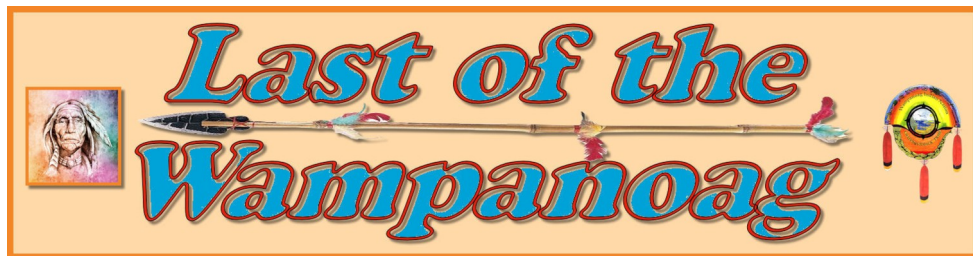
It was not the custom of the Indians to vote on any questions that were discussed at their meetings. They talked the matter over and then adopted the plan that most of them thought was best. But at this time they were unable to decide what to do in order to get back that which they had lost, and how to prevent losing any more. And so they kept on talking over plans. Fifty-five years of peace and friendship with the English had resulted in giving the white men all the land of any value, while the Wampanoags were decreasing in numbers and each year were finding it more and more difficult to live.

The young warriors urged immediate action. They wanted war, and wanted it then, and desired to keep it up until the English should be driven out of the country.

Philip was opposed to this. He knew how strong the English were, and that it would be impossible to drive them out. He saw that the time had gone by when the English could be expelled from the country. He threw his influence with the older warriors, and for a while succeeded in holding the younger men in check. He felt that the Indians could never be successful in a war with the English when the tribe owned only thirty guns and had no provisions laid aside to carry them through the war.







## King Philip's War

Philip (Metacomet) did his best to keep at peace with the English. For a while he succeeded. But his young warriors began to steal hogs and cattle belonging to the settlers, and on one pleasant Sunday in June, 1675, when the people were at church, eight young Indians burned a few houses in the village of Swansea, the nearest town to the Wampanoag headquarters at Mount Hope. The whites immediately raised a few troops, marched after the Indians, and had a little skirmish with them.

Philip was not with his warriors at the time. The attack on the whites had been made against his express orders. When he heard that the Indians and settlers had really had a battle, he wept from sorrow, something which an Indian rarely does.

Everything seemed to go wrong. He tried to make peace with the whites, but they would not listen to him. The young warriors no longer paid any attention to what he said. They went on destroying property and killing cattle.

After leaving Swansea, they went to Taunton and Middleboro, where they burned several houses and killed a few persons. But troops soon arrived from Boston and Plymouth, and in a few days the Indians were driven back to their homes at Mount Hope.

The English hurried on after them, and the war that followed is known in history as King Philip's War.

Philip and the Indians swam across Narragansett Bay and went to some of their friends in the Connecticut Valley. There they obtained the help of the Nipmucks, who had never been very friendly towards the English.

We do not know where Philip was during the war. He knew that he would be held responsible for it, although he had done everything in his power to prevent it.



For a year the war was carried on, one hundred miles away from his home, and never once was he known to have been connected with any fighting, nor was he even seen by the English during that time. Some of them thought that he was directing the war, but really it was carried on by other tribes of Indians that had not been very friendly towards the whites. The Wampanoags seem to have had very little connection with the war.

The Indians attacked the English towns in the Connecticut Valley, and the more exposed places on the frontier of the colony where the people were few and scattered.

No battle was fought in the open field. The Indians did not fight in that way. They secretly surrounded a town, rushed in from all sides, killed as many people as possible, took what property they could carry away, and burned all that remained.

They knew all the paths in the forests, swamps, and thickets. They were fast runners, and went rapidly from town to town.

Their favorite method of fighting was in an ambush. That was something peculiar to the Indians. The English had never heard of that way of fighting before they came to America. The Indians would lie down flat on the ground or stand behind trees or in a bush or thicket. When the enemy came along with no suspicion that any one was near, the Indians suddenly gave a yell and fired their arrows or guns at them. This would startle them and generally cause them to run away.

The war was one of the most dreadful in the history of our country. A farmer left his home in the morning not knowing whether he would ever see his wife and children again. His gun was always in his hand. Laborers were cut off in the field. Reapers, millers, women at home, and people on their way to and from church were killed.

Nearly every town in the Connecticut Valley was destroyed by the Indians, and the people suffered terribly. The Indians were very successful during the first year of the war. They lost but few warriors and did an immense amount of injury to the whites. This caused the young warriors to believe that Philip and the old warriors were wrong, and that it was really possible for them to drive the English from the country.



# *Last of the Wampanoag*

## **The Last Days Of Metacomet**

During the winter there was very little fighting. In the spring the Indians did not fight with any spirit. They had begun to get tired of the war. Many wished for peace. The Narragansetts who had been helping in the war had suffered a terrible defeat from the English.

The English began to understand better the Indian method of fighting. They attacked the Indians wherever they could find them. They surprised several large forces of Indians in different places. Then it began to look as if Philip and the old warriors were right and the young warriors were wrong. Several sachems had been killed. The Indians had no stores of corn. The English tore up every field that the Indians planted. Finally, the Indians gave up hope. They were being starved out. During the summer of 1676, large numbers of them surrendered to the whites.

Philip was not seen from the time he swam across Narragansett Bay until in July, 1676, when he returned to his old home at Mount Hope. His wife and son had been captured earlier in the spring, and he knew that the cause of the Indians was lost.

He wanted to see his old home once more, the place where he had lived for sixty years, but which he felt he was now going to lose forever. We can see him as he returned to his home, now desolated by war, his wigwam destroyed, his cornfield trodden down, his family taken from him, his friends taken captive in the war. He felt that the war was wrong, that his young warriors had been too hasty in starting it without making proper preparations for it. He looked into the future. It seemed very dark to him.

The war indeed was nearly over. The Wampanoags were talking about surrendering. Philip knew that surrender meant death for him. He refused even to think of it. When one of his warriors suggested it to him he killed him on the spot.

The English soon learned that Philip had returned to his old home. They surrounded him. On the twelfth day of August, 1676, he was shot in an ambush by the brother of the Indian he had killed for suggesting that he surrender.

And now, see how barbarous the English settlers could be. They cut off his hands and quartered his body, leaving it to decay on four trees. They carried his head to Plymouth, and placed it on the end of a pole. Then they appointed a public day of thanksgiving.

Philip's wife and children were taken to the Bermudas and sold as slaves, in common with the other Indians captured in the war. Thus the Wampanoag tribe of Indians came to an end.

Philip was unjustly blamed by the Plymouth people for starting the war. They thought that he was in league with several other tribes in New England and New York, and that he intended to drive out the English if he could. That was why they fought so desperately, and at the end of the war removed the remnants of the tribe from New England. It is true that the Indians would have been obliged to move in time. Philip undoubtedly saw that, but he believed that peace was best and he urged it on his followers. The English did not know this, and the result was that Philip was held responsible for a war which he had opposed from the outset.

*(Note) King Philip's death effectively ended the war, although clashes continued throughout New England until the Treaty of Casco was signed in 1678. King Philip's War is considered the bloodiest war per capita in U.S. history. It left several hundred colonists dead and dozens of English settlements destroyed or heavily damaged. Thousands of Indians were killed, wounded or captured and sold into slavery or indentured servitude. The war decimated the Narragansett, Wampanoag and many smaller tribes and mostly ended Indian resistance in southern New England, paving the way for additional English settlements.*

**END – Last Of The Wampanoag**

## About the Author

**Larry W Jones is a songwriter, having penned over 7,700 song lyrics. Published in 22 volumes of island themed, country, cowboy, western and bluegrass songs. The entire assemblage is the world's largest collection of lyrics written by an individual songwriter.**

**As a wrangler on the “Great American Horse Drive”, at age 68, he assisted in driving 800 half-wild horses 62 miles in two days, from Winter pasture grounds in far NW Colorado to the Big Gulch Ranch outside of Craig Colorado.**

**His book, “The Oldest Greenhorn”, chronicles the adventures and perils in earning the “Gate-to-Gate” trophy belt buckle the hard way.**



## **Other books published by Larry W Jones:**

**A Squirrel Named Julie and The Fox Ridge Fox**  
**The Painting Of A Dream**  
**The Boy With Green Thumbs and The Wild Tree Man**  
**Red Cloud – Chief Of the Sioux**  
**Spotted Tail – The Orphan Negotiator**  
**Little Crow – The Fur Trapper's Patron**  
**Chief Gall – The Strategist**  
**Crazy Horse – The Vision Quest Warrior**  
**Sitting Bull - The Powder River Power**  
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